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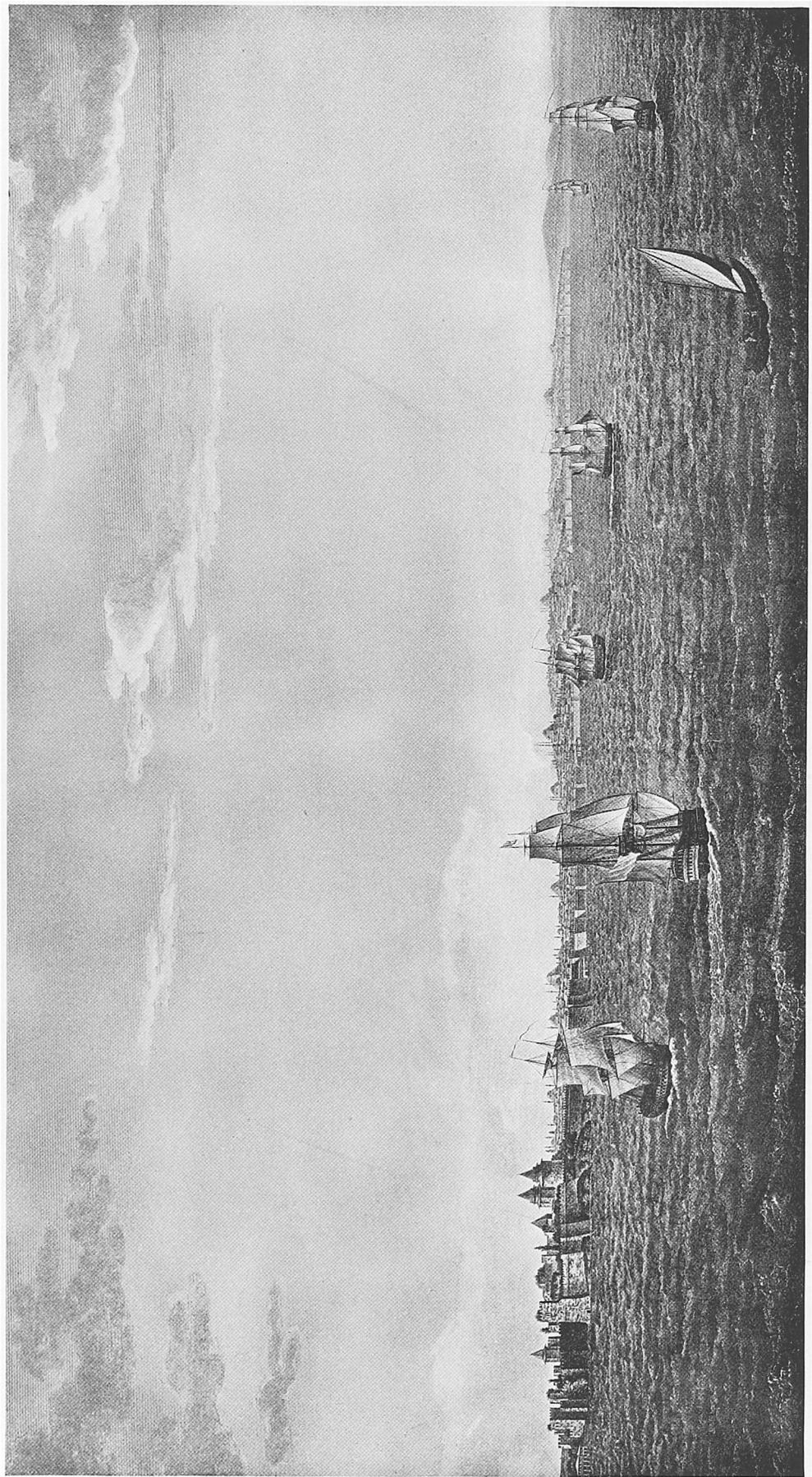
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Castle of the Seven Towers and View of Constantinople

HISTORY REPEATING ITSELF IN THE DARDANELLES

HISTORY repeats itself—and for the same reasons. Three thousand years ago, as today, there lay at the mouth of the Hellespont a great army, convoyed by a great navy, fighting for the possession of the land. They met with a stubborn resistance. For the shore, as it is today, was fortified. The story is told in the "Iliad." Soon after the year 1200 B.C.—some three thousand years ago—the fortress of Troy was taken and sacked by Greek invaders from the west.

Today, after a lapse of thirty centuries, the Turks and their allies, the Germans, are fighting the Entente powers for the same object as the Trojans fought the Greeks. The aim of the defenders of the Dardanelles was and is to keep the ships of the west from commerce with the Black Sea. The Black Sea or Euxine trade was an essential economic need to the Greeks. The "Iliad" poetically predicates the siege of Troy upon the elopement of Helen with Paris. The modern Greeks might as well have declared war upon the French over "La Belle Hélène" of Offenbach. There were other Helens, but there was but one passage to the trade of the Black Sea. The Euxine must be reached via the Hellespont (Dardanelles), Sea of Marmora and Bosphorus—or not at all. What the Greeks wanted was not Helen, but unobstructed commerce with the Euxine—what we call the Black Sea Trade. One of the great cereal areas of the world lies on the plains that sur-

round the northern and north-western shores. From Sulima, Galatz, Braila, and the other ports of the Danube, from Odessa and Nikolaieff, from Varna, Burgas and Kustendje, come vast quantities of wheat, maize, barley and oats. By cutting off these supplies Turkey struck her worst blow at the west before she had fired a single shot. The only outlet for these immense supplies is through the Dardanelles.

Russian granaries in the Black Sea region could supply the cereal needs of all the Western powers of the Entente. America is, and undoubtedly can continue to do so. Naturally, however, for economic reasons, the Entente powers are anxious to help Russia to a proper trade balance. The opening of the Dardanelles would mean an outlet for the vast grain supply she has to sell, and an inlet for the vast ammunition supply she has to buy, and which she now receives, far too sparingly for her needs, by the indirect routes of Archangel, far to the North, and Vladivostock, far to the East.

In this new Trojan War there are two Helens. The Helen of the Western powers of the Entente is grain. Her ornaments are sheaves of wheat. The Helen of Russia is ammunition. From the Euxine she is reaching out toward the Dardanelles for a sword. Out of the mouth of the Dardanelles grain runs, like sand out of an hour glass, into the lap of the Western Entente powers. Turn the glass, and out of the

mouth of the Bosphorus, ammunition runs, like sand into the lap of Russia.

Into this country of vast potential wealth the progressive nations of the west have been pressing since the earliest dawn of history. The nations of the Black Sea area have never been enterprising sailors or merchants. They have always hitherto been content to allow the mercantile countries to come to them, and traffic with them at their own gates. Thus there has never, till quite recent days, been any pressure to force the Straits from within. We are apt to forget how short a time has elapsed since Russia made good her footing on the shores of the Black Sea. It was only in 1794 that she conquered the site where Odessa now stands; the town itself was founded in the early years of the last century. It is the appearance of a nation seeking exit instead of entrance which forms the only material alteration of the Black Sea problem in modern days.

It is in the direction of their length, and strictly as a water-way, that the Dardanelles have played their important part in history. Crosswise they have been of only secondary account. The produce of the plains and valleys on either side comes to the ports on their shores only to be shipped up or down their length out to sea. The neighbouring countries are accessible to cheap carriage by sea; and with this inexpensive method, the costly transport over hills and uplands can never compete.

Armies have crossed, and on a large scale, the two most famous military passages being those of Xerxes in 480 and of Alexander in 334 B. C. The former, a great spectacle, can be read

of in the immortal narrative of Herodotus, who tells of the bridging of the straits from Abydos to Sestos; how the first bridge was destroyed by a storm, how Xerxes' wrath was aroused, how the disobedient Hellespont was scourged with three hundred strokes of the lash, and a pair of fetters let down into the water, while all the time it was insultingly called the "salt river" and reviled for revolting against its master (Xerxes) who "will pass over thee whether thou wilt or not." Then, when the Egyptian and Phenician engineers had at last completed the bridge and the passage was prepared, Xerxes reviewed his army from a throne set on the hills of Abydos, and called for a sham fight between the ships. The army crossed over in seven days and seven nights, going on continuously without any pause.

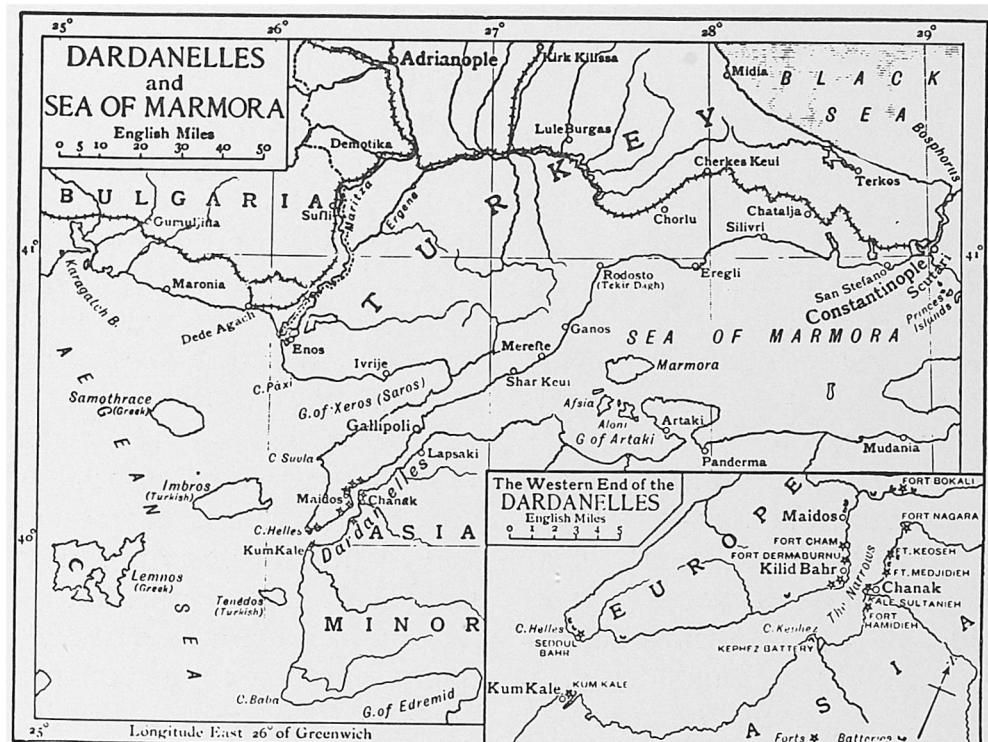
De Tott's battery, built for the Turks in the XVIII century by the French engineer, after whom it is named, and of Kum-kale, on the European side, are familiar names today. Their sites figured in the dramatic crossing of Alexander on his way to the battle of the Granicus and the overthrow of Persia. Passing down the peninsula to the town of Elæus, where de Tott's battery now stands, he paid his devotions at the tumulus near by, which was known to antiquity as the tomb of Protesilaus, the first hero to fall in the landing of the Greek army before Troy. Thence he crossed to the European side, to the sand-spit of Kum-kale. Here stood the great tumulus of unknown age, still a landmark to all who enter the straits. To the Greeks it was sacred as the tomb of Achilles. From Achilles Alexander claimed, through his mother,

direct descent. Therefore he paid especial honour to the tomb, anointing it with oil and performing other ceremonies.

When Xerxes called the Hellespont a "salt river," he was really stating a scientific fact. The Hellespont is the course of a submerged river valley, and still preserves the main characteristic of its origin in the superficial current which runs down it with an

and are all in favour of the defence so long as there is no pressure from the east, "and such pressure has never yet effectually come." These conditions weighed heavily against the naval attack made earlier in the present war, and the current, accelerated by the wind, actually was employed with deadly effect by the defence in sending down floating mines.

Walter Leaf, in the "Quarterly Re-



From the Dardanelles to the Black Sea

average speed of $1 \frac{1}{2}$ knots, sometimes attaining in the narrower part a maximum of five to about six miles an hour. To the effect of the current must be added the equally important though less regular influence of the wind, which for nine months out of the twelve blows with the current from the North-east often with violence. These conditions under which the command of the straits has to be exercised are all against those who come from the west,

view," distinguishes three stages in the development of the defence, corresponding to the growth of man's control of material power—the Trojan, the Athenian, and the Turkish stages. Each had a different method, and therefore a different site. The Trojan system was one of passive control by possession of the shores and was exercised at the very mouth of the straits. The second, or Athenian, was control by navies; for this purpose harbours were needed,

and the point of command moved to the two opposite harbours of Sestos and Abydos, at the northern end of the narrows. The third or Turkish method was control by artillery; and for this purpose the narrowest point in the whole strait was naturally chosen for the two castles of Chanak and Kilid-ul-bahr.

Of the first, the Trojan, it may be explained that the fortress of Troy prevented the merchant ships of the west from sailing upwards. Therefore the Euxine trade had to come down to meet the *Ægean* under the walls of Troy, which grew wealthy thereby, since its passive control was effective.

The Greeks established numerous colonies, not only along both shores of the Hellespont, but all round the two inner seas, the Propontis (Sea of Marmora) and the Euxine. All flourished greatly on the Euxine trade. This Athens saw; and on the control of the Hellespont she founded her empire. Hitherto a third-rate town, she made her first bid for an empire over the seas by fighting for a hold on the Hellespont. About 550 B. C., under Pisistratus, Sigeum was founded on the western ridge about half a mile south of the present village of Yeni Shehr.

And now already we find, in war annals, mention of Gallipoli, where active military operations, at the present writing—some two thousand three hundred years later—are being carried on. For Sigeum was not a successful colony. It was on the wrong side of the straits; and the effective base of Athenian empire was laid on the European shore by an unauthorised private adventurer, the elder Miltiades. He was invited by a native tribe of the Penin-

sula to help them against some powerful neighbours, and with a company of free lances succeeded in establishing an independent principality, including the whole of the Thracian Chersonese, which now is the Peninsula of Gallipoli; and this after his death passed to his nephew, the younger and more famous Miltiades. It is with the fall of Sestos that Herodotus appropriately closes his history; for the capture of the place by the Athenians marks the end of the struggle against Persia, and the opening of a new era, that of the Athenian Empire.

Athens, essentially a commercial and industrial state, was wholly dependent upon imports for the food of her people; and by holding the Hellespont she could secure the passage of the Euxine corn-ships upon which her very existence depended. As her empire began by the capture of Sestos, so it was destroyed close to Sestos in the battle of *Ægospotami*, less than a century later, a bold enemy utilizing, as the Turks did last February, the current and the wind.

Athens' second possession of the straits; the spreading to them of the Roman Empire and the Byzantine glories of Constantinople must be passed over for lack of space. When the Turks came, in 1356, they were led by their military instinct to fix on the straits, and on Sestos as the vital point. Suleiman Pasha did not even take an army. With a picked body of a few hundred men, he crossed the straits on rafts by night, and surprised Justinian's impregnable castle of *Choiridokastron* ("Pig's Castle"). The fall of the place was worthy of its name. Most of the garrison were absent, employed on agricultural work. The walls were

easily scaled over a great heap of manure stacked against them. Then we hear of Gallipoli again. For the following year the Turks, working northwards from Sestos, seized Gallipoli, and made it their bridge-head for a further advance. By 1361 Adrianople was in their hands, and Constantinople was cut off from the west. Its final fall was delayed for nearly a century by the wholly unforeseen attack of Timur and his Mongols on the Turkish rear. None the less the fatal blow to Constantinople, as to Athens, had been delivered at Sestos. "It is characteristic of Byzantine fatuity that the Emperor John Palæologos should have received the news of the capture of Choridokastron with the inane jest, 'After all, they have only taken a pigsty.'"

Constantinople fell in 1453; and the Turks set about securing the straits. A new era had begun, and there was no need to waste a fleet in holding the straits now that they could be commanded by guns. New conditions, however, prompted a new point of defence. Harbours had fixed the naval defence at Sestos and Abydos. But for guns the question depended upon range, and the straits were not narrowest at those points. The general width at the upper end of the narrows is about 2500 yards, and is nowhere less than 2200. Four miles lower down, the straits contract to 1400 yards; and it was here that were placed the two forts, the "Old Castles" of Chanak and Kilid-ul-bahr, both of which, until February last stood intact; Chanak, with a massive square central keep, faced by Kilid, a pictur-

esque tower planned in the shape of a trefoil or heart. Both were originally armed with guns throwing huge stone shot up to 1000 lb. weight, incapable, however, of being trained, and discharged only as a ship came into the line of fire. The town of Chanak or Dardanelles sprang up; and Sestos and Abydos were finally deserted. The site of Abydos now holds only forts and their garrison. The site of Sestos is a ploughed field; the only visible remains are the walls of "Pig's Castle." In the Seventeenth Century the range of guns had improved sufficiently to make it worth while to defend the outer entrance. The two "New Castles" of Kum-kale and Sedd-ul-bahr were built by the Vizier Köprülü just after the middle of the century, and strengthened in Eighteenth by Baron de Tott, who added also the battery on the site of the ancient Elæus. Since then the straits have only once been forced, by Sir John Duckworth in 1807. Little resistance was offered to the upward passage; but, while Sir John was artfully detained at Constantinople, the forts in his rear were hastily strengthened by French engineers. The admiral had to retreat lest he might be cut off, and in descending the channel he suffered not inconsiderable loss from the huge stone cannon-balls of the guns.

And now, three thousand years after the fall of Troy, the world, as I write, awaits the outcome of another armed attack, based upon the same issue—the control of Euxine commerce, the trade of the Black Sea.